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Two letters on Scottish affairs

TWO LETTERS

ON

SCOTTISH AFFAIRS,

FROM

EDWARD BRADWARDINE WAVERLEY, Esq.

TO

MALACHI MALAGROWTHER, Esq.,

"I believe I have satisfied you, Colonel Mac Ivor, that your resentment was founded on a misapprehension.—You must state this matter properly to your Clan, to prevent a recurrence of their precipitate violence."—WAVERLEY.

John Wilson Croker,

SECOND EDITION.

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TO

MALACHI MALAGROWTHER, Esq.

Waverley-Honour, Feb. 28, 1826.

My Dear Cousin,

Distant as our relationship is, I can never hesitate to acknowledge it, out of respect to that illustrious person whom fame reports to be our common progenitor.

I thank you for sending me a copy of your Pamphlet on the "Proposed Change of the Currency in Scotland," and I hope you will take in good part the criticism which I cannot, I own, repress on this production.

I never can cease to feel a deep interest in every thing that relates to Scotland. I have Scotch blood in my veins, derived from my grandmother, the celebrated Rose Bradwardine; and, by the increase of manufactures and the im-

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provements of agriculture, the estate of Tully Veolan, which I derive from her, gives me a still more substantial claim to concern myself in Scottish affairs.

I therefore need, I hope, make no apology for the following observations, which, as a *Briton*, deriving my blood from the Caledonians and the Saxons, and possessing property both in Scotland and England, I think myself not merely justified, but, in honour and conscience, obliged to make.

I need not tell *you* that the remoteness of our relationship, and of our residence (to say nothing of *principles*) has precluded any acquaintance between me and the Malagrowthers; but I confess that I am surprised, as well as concerned, to find in you so little resemblance to our common parent.

He was not only one of the ablest men of his day in all the walks of literature, but he sweetened even the bitter cup of politics with candour and good humour, and, in all the ordinary intercourses of life, was cheerful, friendly, right-headed, and, above all, right-hearted. You, on the contrary, make it your boast that you are

poor and peevish—a growler by profession—one who suffers under a chronic jaundice—and I fear that, in addition to the amiable picture which you thus draw of yourself, it may be shown that your reasoning is no better than your temper, and that, to borrow poor Sheridan's elaborate sarcasm, you draw on your fancy for your facts, and on your memory for your jokes.

It is not the least proof of how much you degenerate from the good taste of your illustrious progenitor, that you have thought the peevishness, which might be excused in the hasty columns of a newspaper, worth preserving in the more permanent shape of a pamphlet.

It is to this pamphlet that I mean to apply my observations; and I shall begin with its title-page, for I think you have fallen into the ominous misfortune of stumbling at the threshold.

The object of your pamphlet is, as this title-page informs us, to complain of the "Proposed change of Currency, and other late alterations, as they affect, or are intended to affect, the *Kingdom of Scotland;*" and, in the course of your letter, you ridicule and revile all such alterations as either silly or insulting attempts to establish

a system of *assimilation and uniformity* in law, revenue, and commercial finance, between Scotland and England.

Now, my dear Sir, this too-candid title page advances a radical error, which pervades your whole letter—*the kingdom of Scotland!* If Scotland were indeed a *kingdom*—a separate and independent sovereignty—the question of uniformity and assimilation might be open to *some*, though certainly not to *all*, the observations you make, but, as the case happens to be, you have mistaken *Sister Peg* (as you elsewhere are pleased to designate her) for QUEEN *Margaret;* and your prognostics, allow me to say, are just of the same force as the opinion of the Empiric, who, having been consulted (in that peculiar mode which was the fashion of his day) on a case which he supposed to be that of a Lady, was so unlucky as to pronounce that a Doctor of Divinity was pregnant, and to prescribe for the reverend gentleman certain means and medicaments, altogether unsuitable to the real state of the affair.

You mention in your letter, that you had heard from your grandfather, of a certain old treaty,

called the Treaty of Union, and you profess a hope that this obsolete document may even yet be discovered and exhibited in the Museum of Scottish Antiquities.

You need scarcely have told us, that you had never seen this treaty. Every page of your letter, from the title to the colophon, exhibits a happy ignorance both of its enactments and its spirit, but as I have had the good fortune to meet with a copy of this recondite document, I can take upon myself to inform you, that, somewhere about the year 1707, Scotland ceased to be a *kingdom*, as also did England, and the separate nationalities of each were merged in the Imperial name and sovereignty of Great Britain; and I think that your idea of a UNION, which was *not* to lead to assimilation of laws and manners and to identity of feelings and interests, might be expected to have occurred to the blundering brains of Paddy Blake, rather than to the precise and dialectic frame of mind to which the Malagrowthers lay claim.

In most *unions* the bride is expected to assume the name, share the fortunes, and assimilate with the manners, of the husband. Your notion

of what was to be expected from Scotland, on her union with England, seems on the contrary, to be like that which your renowned relative, Sir Mungo, entertained of Mrs. Martha Trapbois, when she condescended to intermarry with Mr. Ritchie Moniplies. "It seems to me," said the knight, "that this bride of yours is like to be *master* and *mair* in the conjugal state."

To this little error of your title-page, relative to the KINGDOM of Scotland, you subjoin a scrap of Latin not much more fortunate—

Ergo, Caledonia, nomen inane, vale!

By this motto you must, I suppose, mean that the late and present measures of the Goverment have reduced your *kingdom* of Scotland to the state of pitiable desertion which that quotation implies.

Now, as the quotation seems to be of no very modern date (though it certainly does not belong to *classical* times), it follows that Ministers, according to your own shewing, are only bringing back Scotland to her pristine state; and you must also admit that nothing has been, in past times, more frequent than a Scotch-

man's bidding farewell to his country—"*Inanitatis ergo.*" So far, at least, no *laudator temporis acti* could have any reason to complain, even if the quotation were apposite; but I am justified in adding that some of the very measures against which you remonstrate, have tended very much to produce a happier state of things—to substitute wealth and plenty for the said inanity, and the power of living comfortably at home, to the necessity of bidding "*farewell to Caledonia!*"

I have dwelt a little longer on your title-page than perhaps might have been expected; but I am a literary physiognomist, and I thought I saw in the features of your frontispiece, strong characteristics of what was to follow.

I shall now proceed to observe on the successive points of your letter itself.

You begin by complaining of alterations of the LAW, and you expend ten pages in condemning all such innovations in the lump. You complain that the English, so averse to any inroad on their own habits, are yet willing enough to impose them on their neighbours, and "that, *like the* "*Friars in the Duenna*, the English Monks of the "law will not tolerate in their lay brethren of the

" North" the same feeling of respect and attachment to their legal institutions which the English entertain for theirs.

I do not exactly see the drift of this allusion. In the *Duenna*, if I recollect aright, the Monks *denied* to the lay brother a participation in their luxury, whereas your meaning seems to be, that the perverse generosity of the English endeavours to cram these good things down the throats of the reluctant Scotch. The illustration must, I think, be admitted to be a blunder.

You are very grateful that this spirit of innovation was not applied to Scotland for the first fifty years of the last century; but you are grateful, not so much to the Ministers and Statesmen of those days, as to the " *edges of the Scotch claymores*," to which—with rather less loyalty than belongs to our family—you are pleased to allude.

I shall not stop to inquire whether the *edge of a claymore* is a good argument in a question of legal improvement or civil administration, nor will I insist on the obvious retort that, if *claymores* had *edges* at Preston-Pans, *bayonets* had *points* at Culloden; but I will say, that if you meant to

excite our sympathy, and to conciliate our good will, towards Scotland, you take a strange mode of doing so by reminding us of her rebellions, at once so absurd and so atrocious, and by referring, *as the chosen and regretted period of national happiness*, to those fifty years, during which Scotland was, in the opinion of all mankind (except the Malagrowthers), impoverished and disgraced by disaffection and political bigotry, by tumults against the laws, and by insurrections against the liberties of the land.

But allow me to acquaint you, that your *minatory* allusion is historically false; for in the year 1725, just in the middle of that period in which you think your claymores were so influential, one of the first, the greatest, and the most offensive, of our modern innovations, was effected by the Act for Disarming the Highlands.

This Act, I admit, shewed that we thought your claymores dangerous implements, but it shewed, also, that they did not deter the Imperial Parliament from doing its duty by Scotland and by the Empire.

But if, in your opinion, the claymores saved your beloved country from innovation during the

first half century, *contempt*, you say, secured her during the last.

"Neglected as she was, and perhaps because "she was neglected, Scotland, *during the space* "*from the close of the American War* TO THE PRE- "SENT DAY, has increased her prosperity in a "ratio *more than five times greater* than that of "England."

Such are your own words, such is your unequivocal admission;—*down to the present day too!!!* Scotland has gone on improving, in a five-fold ratio, for *fifty* years, *down to the present day*, and yet the first part of your letter is full of *complaints* of innovations made within the last five-and-twenty years; and I will add, what you omit, that, *during the whole of that period*, innovations have been gradually, but steadily, in progress. No year has passed without some moral approximation of Scotland and England, and the result is—National degradation?—Public distress?—Retrogradation in wealth, happiness, and honour?—No—but a FIVE-FOLD *increase in every species of prosperity!*

You are a cynical creature, Malachi, but your disposition to *truth* is stronger even than your

bile, and forces itself through the melancholy mist in which a fit of ill humour has shrouded your intellect.

Again—after denouncing all the alterations which, during the last 20 years, have taken place in the law in Scotland as "*the wanton inroads of every juvenile statesman*"—as the "*manglings of junior students in a common dissecting room*"—as, in short, "*experimenta in corpore vili*"—you, the very next moment, like a vicious cow, kick down your own pail, and, with the same inconsistent candour which I have just remarked upon, you proceed to contradict, even in terms, every syllable you have written.

"I do not mean to dispute," you say, "that "*much alteration* was NECESSARY in our laws, and "that much benefit has followed many of the "great changes which have taken place; I do not "mean to deprecate a gradual approach to the "English system, especially in commercial law. "The Jury Court, for example, was a fair "experiment, in my opinion, cautiously intro- "duced as such, and placed under such regula- "tions as might best assimilate its forms with "those of the existing Supreme Court."

Could there be, I ask—supposing Malachi Malagrowther to be a person of some authority—could there be a more direct approval of what had been done, or a stronger encouragement to proceed in so *beneficial a course*, than the above quoted sentence affords?

I could have wished indeed, that your approbation had been more frank and generous, less alloyed by peevish reserves, and captious exceptions, and that your view of the gradual improvements of Scotland had partaken more of the candid and liberal spirit of Baillie Nicol Jarvie, than the narrow prejudices of Andrew Fairservice. I cannot resist the pleasure of quoting the passage in which the magic pen of our family historian has contrasted the sentiments of those characters.

"The Baillie saw with the prospective eye of "an enlightened patriot, the buds of many of "those future advantages which have only *blos-* "*somed* and *ripened within these few years.* I "remarked also, and with great pleasure, that "although a keen Scotchman, and abundantly "zealous for the honor of his country, he was "disposed to think liberally of the sister king-

"dom. When Andrew Fairservice (whom, by the "way, the Baillie could not abide) chose to im- "pute the accident of one of the horses casting his "shoe to the deteriorating influence of the *Union*, "he incurred a severe rebuke from Mr. Jarvie*."

This passage seems very "germain to the matter" in discussion between us. Our historian, you see, does not agree with you that the last few years have been marked with any thing dishonourable or disadvantageous to Scotland: on the contrary, he says, that in them your prosperity, which was only *in bud* before, has *blossomed* and *ripened*. I recommend also to your observation the liberal and grateful spirit in which Mr. Jarvie was disposed to receive the interference of England; and I think that if you had had in your memory Mr. Fairservice's ludicrous appeal to the *Union*, on the subject of the horse-shoe, you would not have invoked the spirit of that solemn treaty, on the matter of the dismissal of an exciseman.

But, even when you are obliged to admit that the *measures* themselves have been right and beneficial, you complain that they were not introduced by the *proper persons*. You

* Rob Roy, Vol. ii. p. 310.

confess that the haggis is excellent, and the cock-a-leekie as good, as that of which King James and Sir Mungo partook at Castle-Collop* ; but it quite turns your stomach to think that they were not prepared by a genuine Scotch cook. Such nicety, methinks "savours of affectations," and, if the fact were true, it would rather be complimentary to those who had studied the Scotch palate with such nice discrimination and such complete success; but I take leave to inform you that your fact is unfounded. As you affect never to have seen the Treaty of Union, it is probable that you have no great acquaintance with the Statute Book, and I shall, therefore, not refer you to a volume, more formidable than that of the *wizard Scott;* but there are some less recondite sources of information to which I may venture to allude.

I have now before me, in the *Edinburgh Annual Register* of 1808, an essay, entitled "A View of the changes proposed and adopted in the administration of justice in Scotland." This paper has been attributed to our excellent friend *Sir Walter Scott*, and if you had consulted it, you

* Vide "The Fortunes of Nigel," vol. iii., ad finem.

would, I think, have avoided some of the errors into which you have fallen: for instance, from it you might have learned that the first "serious alteration" in the constitution of the Scotch Courts was made in 1724, in that first Utopian period during which you imagine that the "*claymore's edge*" kept innovation at a distance, viz., the Act which prohibited the future nomination of extra-ordinary Lords of Session. The author of the essay does not state who the propounder of the measure was, but I can inform you that it was Mr. Duncan Forbes,—*clarum et venerabile nomen*—one of those eminent men on whom Scotland may justly pride herself.

The next serious alteration appears to have been in that *second* Utopian period of yours, immediately following the American war, when, Sir Walter Scott tells us, that—not an *Englishman*—not a young *State Surgeon*—but Sir Ilay Campbell, a Scotchman—a Scotch lawyer—nay, Lord Advocate, and finally Lord President, of Scotland, introduced an important measure of this nature; and Sir Walter proceeds to inform us, that a few years after (all within the same Utopian period) Lord Swinton, not merely a

Scotchman, but a Scotch Judge, made "in a work of great learning and uncommon merit," several of these very proposals, whose adoption Sir Walter seems to recommend, but of which you, on the other hand, highly disapprove. I trust I may be forgiven if, on such a subject, I agree with Sir Walter Scott rather than with Malachi Malagrowther.

These proposals of Sir Ilay Campbell and Lord Swinton, appear to have been the foundation of the measures for improving the Scotch Courts proposed by the Whig Administration in 1807. I grieve at being obliged to confess, that these measures were proposed by an *Englishman* —not, however a *young State Surgeon* as you apprehend, but, by Lord Grenville, then *Prime Minister*, who probably thought, that in dedicating his great station and valuable time to the conduct of these measures, he was paying a due respect to the importance of the subject, and the feelings of the Scottish people. But, although Lord Grenville introduced them, is it possible that you can be ignorant that they were suggested, prepared, discussed, and approved, by the Scotch part of the Administration; and

that, although there was a considerable difference of opinion in Scotland on the subject, it *was* a division of opinion, and that if it was opposed by Scotchmen, it was by Scotchmen also that it was suggested and advocated?

What followed?—When the present Administration, (for I agree with you, that the Administration of to-day may be looked upon as essentially the same,) succeeded the Whigs, that they found all parties in Scotland were agreed that, after what had passed, something must be done.

For this purpose two Commissions have been successively appointed to inquire into the possible improvement of the Scottish law. You would hardly, I suppose, have had these great and intricate questions decided without some previous inquiry; yet, in the bitterness of your wrath against the Ministers, you complain, like Queen Catherine, that

> ——There have been *Commissions*
> Sent down amongst them which have flawed the heart
> Of all their *loyalties.*

I had never before heard that this Commission was unpopular in Scotland, and I cannot but

think, the *loyalty* which could be shaken, as yours seems to have been, by such a measure, was, like your plaids, loosely worn, and easily cast off. In fact, I believe that the principles on which the first Commission was framed, and the spirit with which it was actuated, were perfectly satisfactory to Scotland in general. I know that it included some of the most venerable names in your country; and the report (besides the great ability, moderation, and judgment, with which it was drawn up) has also, in my eyes, another pledge that it contained nothing injurious to the feelings, or detrimental to the interest of Scotland, viz., that it was compiled by the hand, and attested by the signature of *Sir Walter Scott;* whom the Commissioners (with the very reverse of the spirit you impute to them) had appointed Clerk of the Commission. So much for the first assault on your National Institutions.

Of the second Commission, you say that it was composed, "(if Scotchmen *must needs be* "employed) of those who had been too long "estranged from the study of Scottish law to re-

" tain any accurate recollection of the abstruse " science, or any decided partiality for its tech- " nical forms." And you further intimate, with corresponding indignation, that " the opinions " of the Scotch *Lawyers*, nay, of the Scotch " *Judges*, have been something too much ne- " glected and controuled in the course of these " important changes, in which methinks they " ought to have had a primary voice."

This, as regards the *matter of fact*, is rather an unlucky series of assertion. I have shewn you that we have Sir Walter Scott's evidence of the propriety of the constitution and proceedings of the *first* Commission. Now let us see whether we have not even stronger evidence of the propriety of the *second*—the Commissioners named in which were the Lord President, the Lord Justice Clerk, the Lord Chief Baron, Lord Pitmilly, Lord Gillies, and Mr. Baron Hume, all *Scotch Judges* of the greatest reputation and talents; to whom were added the Lord Advocate, the Solicitor-General, and Mr. Cranstoun, three eminent *Scotch lawyers*, the Professor of *Scotch Law* in the University of Edinburgh, and the Deputy-Keeper of the Signet

in Scotland; and, further, (in number sufficient to supply information, but not to sway decisions), two English Masters in Chancery, and two eminent English Barristers.

How this roll of names accords with your statement of the neglect shewn in these proceedings to *Scotch Lawyers and Judges*, you must explain—I cannot.

I am not ignorant that few Sessions of Parliament have passed without some attempts at further innovation; and, perhaps, I as little like the spirit of such innovation as you do: but who have been the innovators? A pack of giddy young Englishmen, as you would have us believe? Whether the gentlemen be giddy or young I will not venture to pronounce; but as to being *Englishmen*—which is the real *gravamen* of your charge—they are undoubtedly, every mother's soul of them, as genuine Scots as Malachi Malagrowther himself. Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Maxwell, Mr. Abercromby, Mr. Peter Grant, Sir Ronald Fergusson, and Lord Archibald Hamilton, have been the stirrers or supporters of most of those questions; and by whom have they been opposed? Undoubtedly by many respectable Scotch Members, but most

powerfully by the English Ministers. If, as you seem to complain, a new Scotch Jury Bill was, after much difficulty and discussion, passed, what were the facts as to that Bill? It was introduced in what was thought an imperfect and injurious form, by a *Scotch* lawyer in the House of Commons, and supported by all that call themselves Scotch Patriots; and it was so pertinaciously pressed that, to prevent mischief, the Scottish Members of the Government were obliged to take it into their own hands, and it was finally carried through the Lords by the Lord Privy Seal of Scotland, and through the Lower House by your Lord Advocate; so that, whether the Bill be good or bad (on which point Mr. M'Wheeble, our hereditary factor at Tally Voelan, has not yet made up his mind), it is evident, Cousin Malachi, that you have to thank or blame your own countrymen for it. What then, I ask, is the pretence for the outcry and clamour which you make, and, what is worse, which you endeavour to spread, that Scotland is maltreated and degraded into "a kind of experimental farm," upon which every *English* quack is encouraged to practise his theories?

I have shown, out of your own mouth, that whatever changes have been made are beneficial; that the quackery of experimentalists has been successfully resisted, and that in all cases the opinions and feelings of the Scottish nation, represented by the Scottish gentry, have been, not merely consulted, but deferred to; and I think I may conclude in the dictum of our relative, Lord Keeper Ashton (as reported in 2nd Tales of my Landlord, p. 25) "That these mutations are *no new sights* in Scotland, and had been witnessed long before the time of this satirical author."

I now proceed to your next grievance.

The Boards of Excise and Customs in Ireland and Scotland have been, it seems, amalgamated with the respective English Boards, and Imperial departments have been thus created for the management of the Imperial Revenue. This to Scotland, is, in your opinion, not only an *injury* but an *insult*. The Malagrowthers are, I readily believe, more sensitive to points of honour, than practised in managing revenues, and your little mistakes upon this head are, therefore, the less surprising. Your national prejudices, and per-

haps some distant prospect of a Commissionership for yourself, your son, or some of your cousins (on the Malagrowther side), prevent, it seems, your discovering any other cause for this arrangement, than that the Irish Board was abolished for malpractices, and that the Scotch Board was abolished for "the sake of *uniformity*, to keep them company;" and you illustrate this by a facetious anecdote of Lord Strathmore's bailiff, who, having put a malefactor into a pair of stocks, that stood at one side of a formal courtyard in the castle of Glammis, hired an innocent Sawney to fill, for *uniformity's sake*, another pair of stocks, which had been (also for uniformity) placed on the other side of the said yard.

The story is a pleasant one, and not the less amusing for being nothing to the purpose.

In the first place, I deny that the change in the administration of the Revenue was made on account of *misconduct* in the provincial Boards. It was framed on a general principle, that as the Revenue to be collected was, as the French used to say, *one and indivisible*, it ought, in all reason, to be managed by *one undivided* department; and

I am sorry to be obliged to add, that abuses at least as serious had been, not very long before, discovered in Scotland. Are you ignorant, my cynical Cousin, that in the year 1809 three Members of one of your Scotch Boards were removed for official impropriety? I do not know to what extent either the Scotch or the Irish officers were blamable; I only state the fact, to disprove the whole of your reasoning, and to show, that if the bailiff of Lord Strathmore had been the justiciar of these delinquents, he would, in the first instance, have had to put *your own countrymen in the stocks*, and to have kept them there a pretty long while before Ireland had furnished *her* quota to the uniformity of the Castle of Glammis.

I am very sorry to observe that you do not confine your misrepresentation of this point to mere jocularity. You state that Scotland was included in this arrangement, because the Government *durst* not attempt it on Ireland alone. The Irish, it seems, wished for a companion in their misery; and "this gratification of his humours was gained," you say, "by Pat's being *up with the pike* and shillelah on any and no occasion."

This, Malachi, I take leave to say, is sharper than even "*the edge of the claymore.*" *That* has been in its sheath for near a century. It is little more than 20 years since the Irish pike was red with rebellion and massacre. It is barely as many months since it has been dyed in midnight assassination. Good God! Cousin, what were you thinking of, when you allowed your pen, or even your mind, to wander into such perilous pleasantries—but, after all your fun and your fury, what is the real amount of the change either in Ireland or Scotland? Why, no more than this—Instead of separate and independent Provincial Boards, standing Committees of the Imperial Board are resident in Dublin and Edinburgh, who do more business than of old, and at half the expense.

The ports of Glasgow, Belfast, and Liverpool, are within 24 hours' sail of each other—they trade in the same articles—they collect revenues for one common Exchequer—yet in each the business was conducted on systems wholly different in principle and in practice. Baillie Jarvie complained, even in his day, of the

than even "*the edge of the claymore.*" The claymore has been in its sheath for near a century. It is little more than 20 years since the Irish pike was red with rebellion and massacre. It is barely as many months since it has been dyed in midnight assassination. Good God! Cousin, what were you thinking of, when you allowed your pen, or even your mind, to wander into such perilous pleasantries—but, after all your fun and your fury, what is the real amount of the change either in Ireland or Scotland? Why, no more than this—Instead of separate and independent Provincial Boards, standing Committees of the Imperial Board are resident in Dublin and Edinburgh, who do more business than of old, and at half the expense.

The ports of Glasgow, Belfast, and Liverpool, are within twenty-four hours' sail of each other—they trade in the same articles—they collect revenues for one common Exchequer—yet in each the business was conducted on systems wholly different in principle and in practice. Baillie Jarvie complained, even in his day, of the Custom-house officers, "who went about on the

" quay, plaguing folk about permits and dockits, " and all that *vexatious* trade*," and I can scarcely think that any of his descendants (one of whom I hear, represents a neighbouring district of Burghs in Parliament) will agree with you in thinking that the *dignity* of Scotland requires that Commerce should be taxed to the amount of 12,000*l.* per annum, for the high privilege of being puzzled by *three* codes of laws, embarrassed by *three* systems of regulations, and plagued by *three* tribes of officers; when that very treaty of Union (of which you happen to be so strangely and so unfortunately ignorant) provides especially, that " all laws concerning *regulations of trade, customs, and excise*, shall be, after the Union, the same in England and Scotland." One, indeed, can only wonder, that in the teeth of the law and common sense such anomalies should have been tolerated so long.

In the same spirit in which you lament over the impaired *dignity* of Scotland, in being obliged to content herself with *three* Commissioners of Excise instead of *five*, you cast some " longing,

* Rob Roy, vol. ii., p. 273.

lingering looks" towards certain other convenient retreats, in which the *dignity* of Scotland loved to nestle her unfledged offspring, but which the hand of that *durus arator*—the economical reformer—has despoiled:—

" ——at illa
Flet noctem, saxoque sedens miserabile carmen
Integrat, et mæstis late loca quæstibus implet."

You are too well read in the erudite tomes of Mr. Josephus Miller, not to know that I have authority for this allusion to a Caledonian nightingale. A Scotch gentleman having heard it asserted that these birds were not to be found beyond the Tweed, assured the company that this was an error, for that he himself had often seen the *nocturnal songster* which he described as being about the size of a small goose, having little red eyes, and a hooked beak, and delighting to sing all night out of an old ivy bush, *whoo, whoo, whoo!*

The Scottish Philomel is, we find, the *bird of Wisdom;* and truly it is in a very prudential and calculating strain that she bewails her devastated nests.

" We have consented with submission, if *not* " with cheerfulness, to reductions and abolitions " of public offices required for the good of the " state at large, but which must affect materially " the *condition* and even the *respectability* of our " *overburdened aristocracy*."

Indeed, Cousin, I may say with honest *Stephano*, " You are in your fit now, and your talk " is not after the wisest ;" for I fancy you will not meet much countenance in this comfortable theory of yours, that public employments are instituted for the advantage, not of the public, but of the happy individuals capable of filling them, and that it is of no consequence what sums may be drawn from the pockets of the people, provided the *kith* and *kin* of the Malagrowthers are gratified and accommodated by a due share of the sum total.

Your notion of the *real utility* of a public office, reminds me of a circumstance which took place a few years ago in the House of Commons.

A worthy Scottish gentleman, well known to you and me, was one evening endeavouring to move the compassion of the House with a lamen-

tation very similar to yours, over the abolition of a certain class of offices in Scotland, and amongst others, of *one* which he thought it almost treason and impiety to have abolished: "*abolished,*" exclaimed the late Mr. Whitbread, "so far from this office being *abolished,* I apprehend it is actually filled at this moment with great credit to himself, and advantage to the public, by the honourable complainant himself." "A'weel!" rejoined the Caledonian, nothing disconcerted, "a'weel! I'll nae wrangle wi' ye aboot the office itself, but, I say, the auld salary is aboleeshed, and that's far waur!"

But my letter grows too long, and I must, therefore, break off here, and postpone for a day or two, the observations which I have to make on the other topics of your pamphlet. *En attendant,*

I remain, dear Malachi,

your affectionate Kinsman,

E. Bradwardine Waverley.

LETTER II.

My Dear Cousin,

I shall now proceed to consider what I take to be the chief object, as it certainly was the immediate motive, of your publication; I mean the intention of the Government to endeavour to introduce a metallic currency in lieu of the small notes which now circulate in Scotland to the exclusion of all gold coin.

You profess to have no skill in the *theories* of currency and credit, and you beg leave to consider the question in a purely *practical* view. I pretend to as little proficiency in that most abstruse science, and am as willing as you can be to consider it as a *practical* question; but I fear that we differ as to the meaning of the word *practical;* I think I can see that by a *practical*

view, you really mean a view *narrowed* to the present and momentary state of things, and excluding all considerations of what has passed elsewhere, and of what may, at any future moment, occur in Scotland itself; and this I take to be the great error of those who call themselves *practical* men. They confine their observations to the *local spot*, and the *present* day. He who thinks of *to-morrow* they call a *theorist;* if he looks to the next month, he is a *speculatist;* but if he attempts to legislate for a year or two in advance, he is deemed a perfect *visionary;* or, perhaps—the most injurious term the wit of the *practicals* can devise—even a *philosopher!*

But to proceed to our discussion—

I fear that in the very first line of your observations on this part of your subject you have fallen into a mishap, one of the most unlucky which could occur to a *practical* man—namely, a complete mistake as to the *matter of fact* on which you propose to lecture, which is, as you state it:—

"The business of extending to Scotland the

" provisions of the Bill, prohibiting the issue " of notes under *5l.* in *six months after the regu-* " *lation shall be adopted in England.*"

And in a subsequent passage, you imply, that the effect on Scotland was *at first* intended to be *immediate.*

" Lord Lauderdale," you say, " almost " alone interfered, and, to his infinite honour, " procured a *delay of six months* in the extension " of this Act—a sort of reprieve from the " Southern *jougs.*"

Where you have found all these propositions, or any thing like them, I cannot guess. I live nearer to the seat of Government, and I never heard—never read of them. No human being, to my knowledge, except Malachi Malagrowther, has ever mentioned *six,* or any number of months. Lord Lauderdale's *infinite honour* must, therefore, stand on some other pedestal. The most that I can learn that his Lordship did, was to give to Lord Liverpool an opportunity of removing some of these misapprehensions, which, as the progress of truth is slow, were, I see, still in full force in Scot-

land at the date of your letter. The sum of what I can discover to have been said was, that measures would be brought forward hereafter for Ireland and Scotland, with *such limits as to time*, as the *very different* positions of these countries from that of England might seem to require.

On this false scent, however, you run the rest of your course; but, at the conclusion of your letter, I find, to my utter surprise, the following postscript:—

"Since writing these hasty thoughts, I hear "it reported that we are to have an extension "of our precarious reprieve, and that our *six* "*months* are to be extended to *six years*."

This postscript so alters the state of the case;—so answers all the charges of *hasty* resolutions, *violent* changes, and *precipitate* attempts at assimilation, that I only wonder that, instead of adding such an explanation, you did not throw the letter itself into the fire, or that, at least, you did not imitate the candour of the writer of the story of my grandfather "*Waverley*," who honestly entitles the last chapter of

his work, "*A Postscript which should have been a Preface.*"

I have heard of a worthy Highland Gentleman, who, having a favourite servant dangerously ill, sat down to write to the surgeon of the next town to desire his immediate attendance; but as the Laird was no very expert penman, the poor patient happened to die during the concoction of the epistle. This event, of course, so changed the state of the case, that our intelligent friend thought right to add a postscript to say "Donald is dead, and you need not come;" and with this well considered missive, a messenger was dispatched to the Doctor's residence, which luckily happened not to be above twenty miles off.

But, without dwelling further on the erroneous statement of your letter, and the inaccurate explanation of the postscript, let us suppose, as is I believe the fact, that the Government never for a moment contemplated any change with regard to Scotland, either *immediate*, or *within six months*, but merely expressed an opinion that some such measure as that which

is to come into effect in England in three years, may be advantageous to Scotland at the end of six or seven. What then becomes of your favourite quotation of "*experimentum in corpore vili*," when it is clear that the *experiment* is to be first made upon honest John Bull himself, and that the operation is not even to be commenced in Scotland until it shall have been fully tried and absolutely completed in England!

I am a little at a loss how to correct the misinformation upon which this part of your letter is founded.

I hope you will not be angry if I say, that the errors into which your informant (whoever he is) has led you are so numerous and complicated, that it were tedious to mention all, and difficult to select the principal. Indeed, I may say with *Rosalind*—"There are none principal, they are all like one another as halfpence are—every one fault seeming monstrous till its fellow comes to match it;" but, I shall endeavour to satisfy you, or at least our readers, as to a few of them.

And first, let me observe upon your indignation, that there should be *any legislation at all* on the subject of Scottish bank-notes—a monstrous intermeddling with Caledonian concerns, which never could have occurred to any man's mind except our State quacks, who would force Scotland to swallow this bitter pill, merely because it happens to be necessary for England.

Again, my dear Malachi, I must give you the trouble, and I fear the pain, of turning to the statute-book, where, I have no doubt, you will be astonished to find, that, in the very heart of the good old times,—viz. in the year 1765,—an Act of Parliament was passed, making the most important changes in the whole paper currency of Scotland, and even destroying "at one fell swoop," the greater part of the circulation, viz. all Bank-notes under twenty shillings, which, I have heard my grandfather say, was, at the time, the only circulating medium in Scotland. This calamitous extermination—this massacre of the little innocents—broke, as our family tradition runs, poor old Mac Wheeble's heart—he never looked up, good man,

after the loss of these paper shillings, although there were those who pretended to think that eighty years which had past over his head, and the quantity of Luckie Maclearie's Usquebaugh, which, during the whole period he had poured into it, might account for his decease on less patriotic principles. It is certain, however, that our worthy Baillie deeply lamented the change. He would expatiate by the hour on the advantages of an *exclusive paper currency* —he would ask, what else but the plenty of the *wee-bit* notes enabled the Laird's tenants to pay their rents, and the shopkeepers of Tully Veolan to drive their little trade? As to *silver*, he said it was an expensive article for a poor country to deal in—that he had heard tell that the Southrons had shillings and sixpences of that over-precious metal, nay, even *siller groats, and twal'pennies. They* might, for ought he knew, be able to afford such costly luxuries, but it would be the ruin of poor old Scotland, and he would add, significantly, that the silver dirk of 65 would be found more fatal than the iron blades of the woeful 45. [Indeed, I ought

to say that the marriage of my grandmother, and the birth of my father, had a little counterbalanced in Mr. M'Wheeble's mind the other consequences of the latter celebrated year.]

I cannot discover among M'Wheeble's reasons any one which you might not equally apply to the alteration now proposed, nor in your's any which would not have suited his case. But I allude to *this act* more particularly at present, for the purpose of observing, that *it* is the *first* legislative interference which I can discover with the paper currency of any of the three parts of the United Kingdom; so that Scotland, instead of complaining that she is to be dragged at the tail of England, was really the first to introduce these innovations; and it seems that there was no *English* interest to prompt this Bill, for it was introduced by the Lord Advocate Miller, and five other Scottish Gentlemen of weight and consideration, at the instance, and on the recommendation, of some of the principal Scotch Bankers, who had themselves at that time begun to discover (as perhaps their successors will do bye and bye,) that the circulation was in an unhealthy state.

You ask whether "you *argue* your cause too "high in supposing that the intended legisla- "tive enactment is as inapplicable to Scotland, "as a pair of elaborate knee-buckles would "be to the dress of a kilted Highlander." Allow me to reply, that I do not see any very *high* rate of *argument* in this knee-buckle illustration, but such as it is, I answer it, by referring to the Act of 1765, and by suggesting that the *gold* knee-buckles offered by Lord Liverpool are a great deal more valuable, and not less applicable, than the *silver* knee-buckles which constituted the donation of Lord Advocate Miller.

This Act of 1765, with many subsequent Acts, which I need not detail, affords a complete answer to all that part of your letter which insists that the intended alteration is *contrary to law*, and a direct infringement of the Treaty of Union. But I have a word or two more to say to you upon the manner in which you quote the article of Union on this point.

You tell us that you never saw that document, and that you have learned the article in

question from the recitation of your grandfather. I shall show you, I think, that the poor old gentleman, notwithstanding his pretensions to accuracy, had a very treacherous memory. The Article of Union, *as you quote it*, is as follows: —"That the laws in use within the kingdom "of Scotland do, after the Union, remain in "the same force as before, but alterable by the "Parliament of Great Britain, with this differ- "ence between the laws concerning *public* "right, policy, and civil government, and those "which concern *private* right; that the *former* "may be made the *same* throughout the whole "United Kingdom, but that no alteration be "made in laws which concern private right, "*excepting for the evident utility of the subjects* "*within Scotland.*"

Let us for a moment suppose that your grandfather quoted the article in question fairly; still, I do not see how it can be made available to your argument. Is it possible that you can pretend to argue, that a Bill to regulate the currency of Scotland, and to assimilate it, in due time, with that of the rest of the United

Kingdom, does NOT concern PUBLIC RIGHT, PUBLIC POLICY, nor CIVIL GOVERNMENT; but that, on the contrary, this great affair, which you hold to be of such *general, vital, and national,* importance, is merely a matter of PRIVATE *right!*

You have certainly fallen into this absurdity; and it is so manifest a one, that I do not think any further observation of mine necessary to persuade you out of it; but I have a more serious charge to make against you, or your grandfather, namely, that you have between you, been guilty of a very extraordinary error, in regard to this same article of the Treaty of Union.

It would, I think, be well for the credit of your grandfather's *memory,* if, indeed, the Treaty of Union were as little known to others as it is to you; and I think you will be surprised to hear, that, while the old gentleman affected, with such pretensions to accuracy, to recite the 18th article, he (God knows why,) suppressed the first, the leading and most important, sentence of the article, namely, *that the laws concerning regulation of* TRADE, CUSTOMS, *and* EXCISE,

be the SAME *in Scotland, from and after the Union, as in England.*

Now, as nine-tenths of your pamphlet are employed in asserting the folly and even the *illegality* of assimilation in matters connected with *trade, customs,* and *excise,* it is exceedingly unlucky that these words, which stand in *the very front* of the article, should have so unaccountably slipped the old gentleman's memory. If *you* had been apprised of them, it is clear that your letter never would have been penned; and, I dare say, so extraordinary a suppression will remind you of the celebrated one of that candid reasoner, who attempted to prove from Scripture, "*that there was no God,*" by *only* suppressing the first words of the sentence, "*The fool sayeth in his heart.*"

As I have been so fortunate as to discover the act of 1765, and to supply the *hiatus* which your "poor old grandfather" made in the Treaty of Union, I am satisfied that you must agree with me, that I have swept away all the objections (which, in ignorance of those enactments,) you raised to the *legality* of the proposed measures.

I shall now proceed to explain what I consider the unsoundness of most of your objections to the *policy* and *expediency* of an assimilation of the Scottish and English currency.

And first, let me again revert to the Treaty of Union, the 16th article of which enacts, that "the *coin* shall be the same throughout the United Kingdom," and another article provides, "that a public equivalent shall be made for any "losses which private persons may sustain by "*reducing* the coin of Scotland to the standard "and value of the coin of England."

These provisions prove, beyond all question, that the framers of the Union admitted and established, both in *law* and *policy*, the *principle of assimilation*, and we have seen, that when, in process of time, a deviation from a similarity of currency took place in Scotland, the Imperial Parliament of 1765 stepped in to remove the most prominent difference.

And on *general* principles, I hardly think that even you will deny that this was good policy; but you say, that Scotland stands in circumstances so peculiar, as to exempt her

from the rules which ought to govern all the rest of the world.

You appeal, with absolute confidence, to the prosperity of Scotland, which has grown up under the facilities of *credit*, supplied by the unlimited issues of the paper of the numerous Scottish Banks.

> These reasons (quoth the Knight), I grant
> Are something more significant;
> And yet, they're far from satisfactory,
> T' establish and *keep up your factory.*

I have no doubt whatsoever, indeed, I have personal experience, of the increased and increasing prosperity of Scotland, and I admit that the paper currency may have afforded the capital by which much of this good has been operated; but can any one doubt, that, during the suspension of cash payments in *England* and *Ireland*, advances in prosperity, similar in their nature, though different, perhaps, in their degree, have been made by these countries respectively.

Such a system is specious, and even splendid, but is it *solid?* In England, we think *not*—nay, we think that experience has *proved* that

it is not; and, although it was urged with sufficient pertinacity, and, indeed, not denied in principle, that our gigantic exertions in war, accompanied by such an enormous advance in domestic industry and visible wealth, could not have been achieved without the elastic assistance of a paper currency, yet it has been thought right, and with an almost universal approbation, to return—even at considerable expense and inconvenience—to a metallic circulation in England.

I know not whether an account of the catastrophe of that architectural wonder, the tower of Fonthill Abbey, has reached you. I think it a not unapt illustration of the effects of a *mere* paper system. Nothing was more splendid, nothing could look more solid; it had stood many winters, and had weathered tremendous gales; it wore the character, too, of antiquity, and allied itself harmoniously with the lower and more solid parts of the domestic residence; but, *mole ruit suâ*, and in one night, in weather of no unusual violence, the wonder of Wiltshire was levelled to the dust.

We, in England, have (I hope in good time), seen the danger of this extravagant overbuilding, and we are anxious to exchange for the *solidity* of a metallic foundation, the airy and precarious pinnacles into which a paper currency had enabled us to raise our commercial fabric.

I confess that I cannot see any real, or essential difference between England and Scotland on this point. You, I know, will say, that the Scotch Banks are *all solid*, while the English private Banks are less to be relied upon; but, supposing your opinion of the English provincial Banks were correct, surely the solidity of your Scotch Banks cannot be put in competition with that of the *Bank of England;* and yet it was against the notes of the *Bank of England*, that the Bullion Report, and all the measures which followed it, were specifically directed.

But we now approach the main practical point of the case.

Are your Scotch Banks in reality so solid? This is a delicate question, and one which, I am sorry, that you, and those who agree with

you, have stirred, and stirred with so much pretension, as to make it a necessary ingredient in even the most cursory consideration which can be given to the subject.

I shall deal with it as tenderly as I can. I begin by admitting—and that is as much as I suppose can be asked of me—that the Banks, and the individuals which compose them, are *abundantly opulent*, and possessed, *in the aggregate*, of property sufficient to answer all the engagements they may make. I further admit, that such a foundation is quite solid and sufficient for the general business of trade, and for all the higher transactions of commercial intercourse; but on the other hand, I would ask, what defence do they afford against an *unreasonable* panic, which in matters of paper currency, is the evil most likely to occur, and most necessary to be guarded against? In the late panic in London, firms, possessed—not merely of lands and hereditaments, and such-like inconvertible property, which you represent as being the most satisfactory foundation of the credit of the Scotch Banks—Firms, I say, possessed of *Stock* and *Exchequer Bills* to more

than the amount of their engagements, were unable to convert them into cash for immediate use.

You say that only two or three Scottish Banks have failed in a long series of years. I admit the fact, and might say something of the apologue of the *pitcher and the well*, but I think I can, without the aid of allegory, explain the causes, and consequently, the precariousness, of their exemption from accidents of that nature.

The first cause of their uninterrupted credit is, no doubt, their positive wealth, and the great stake which the partners visibly have in the country; but this cause, as we have just seen in England, is not conclusive against a *panic*.

Sors *hodierna* mihi, *cras* erit illa tua!

The second, I take to be, that the Scotch Banks *hold together*—that, conscious that not one of them could stand, what is called in England a *run*, they help one another for the sake of what is a *common cause*. When a run takes place on a

Bank in Scotland—how is it met? By paying their notes in *specie?* If that were the case, you might well boast of the stability of the Scotch Banks. But I fancy that no such thing as a payment in coin was ever heard of. The threatened Bank glorifies itself if it is able to pay its notes by the notes of one of its neighbours, and thus, by a mutual interchange of support, two Banks, which were objects of suspicion in their respective districts, might weather the panic by the help of the notes of each other; and if their proximity should happen to throw any disfavour on this operation, they need only have recourse to some more distant correspondent, whose paper should happen to be in full credit.

This, as I conclude from facts supplied by yourself, is the real cause that there has been no loss by the failure of any Scottish Banks. In the case of the East Lothian Bank, which seems to have failed, and of another provincial Bank, which was "*in the predicament of suspicion,*" you say, that other respectable houses

" took up and paid all their current engage-
" ments, *without check to the circulation* of their
" notes, or inconvenience to rich or poor;" and, proud of these " modern instances," you ask, " what must be the stability of a *system of credit* " of which such an universal earthquake could " not displace or shake even the slightest indi-
" vidual portion?"

I answer, my dear Cousin, that what you describe is not a system of *credit,* but of *necessity* on the part of the public, and of *mutual insurance* on the part of the bankers. Can that be a healthy system of paper circulation which is not even *checked* by the *actual failure* of the issuers? Can that be a healthy system, when other bankers find it necessary *for their own sakes* (I suppose such acts are never voluntary or gratuitous) to assume, in a moment of great alarm and peril to themselves, the engagements of a neighbouring *bankrupt?*

Thus the very facts on which you rest your opinion of the stability of your system, convince me, " that there is something *rotten* in the state of" Scotland; unless, in addition to all the

good qualities which you, no doubt, justly ascribe to Scottish bankers, you are prepared to add the hitherto-unheard-of generosity of being just as willing to pay the debts of other people as their own.

As long as this confidence exists, and the public is satisfied with this kind of joint-stock security—as long as the ice continues strong enough to bear you—all is well, and your operations glide along with smoothness and rapidity. But if an unlucky accident should happen; if one or two should fall in, is it possible to calculate how many they might drag after them, or what numbers might perish in their attempt to save the original sufferers?

And who can pretend to say *when*, or *whence*, a general panic may be excited? such a panic, I mean, as should affect any considerable quantity of the paper circulation, and occasion a serious run on several of those banks *at once;* and who, still wiser, can foretel what the disastrous consequences of such a panic might be?

The holder of the larger notes would probably have no apprehension as to their *ultimate* pay-

ment; and he might be able or willing to await the convenience of the bankers, or the conversion of their landed properties into cash; but all the ordinary operations of life, which are provided for by the one-pound notes, would be suddenly arrested—Buying and selling, in all the details which support human society, and even existence, would be suspended—the great mass of the people, whose wealth is solely composed of one-pound notes, would be reduced to *sudden beggary*;—thirst and hunger cannot wait the slow process of a *sequestration*;—and it would require the pen of the GREAT UNKNOWN himself, to picture the scenes of starvation, turbulence, and misery, which might, nay, which must, ensue during such a crisis.

To say that such an appalling catastrophe is within the verge of *possibility*, is to prove that it is the duty of a wise Government to take precautionary measures against it. No Government can—and no wise Government will attempt to—regulate matters of commercial credit and confidence between parties capable of judging of their own interests, and of making

a voluntary option as to the degree of confidence they will give. But, with a circulation *exclusively* of paper, and composed of such very minute parts as notes of twenty shillings, the mass of the people accept them *from necessity, and not from confidence.* What is *credit* in the higher classes, is mere *credulity* in the lower, and that credulity which for years may have given currency to a small note circulation, may in a *few hours* overturn it.

These considerations, founded on general and immutable principles, have, I suppose, induced the Government to interfere with the small note circulation of England, and they apply, in my opinion, with equal force to Scotland.

The mode in which the Scotch banks have established this monopoly, and the way in which it operates, under the specious title of *cash credits,* upon which you dilate with so much complacency, are worthy of a little further explanation.

What is called a *cash credit* in Scotland (like *lucus à non lucendo ;* because there is *no cash* to

be seen in any part of the transaction) is managed in the following way:—

A merchant, shopkeeper, or tradesman, goes to a banking-house with two sureties, who become answerable to the bank for his engagements to them; upon which the bank gives him a credit in their books to a certain amount, according to their opinions of the solvency of the *borrower* (for such he is), and the sufficiency of his bondsmen. Upon this credit the tradesman draws on the banker, who pays the draft by the issue of *his own notes,* and for all his advances charges the borrower with the legal interest of five per cent.; or, in other words, the Scotch bankers receive five per cent. for a handful of paper, which it does not cost them a farthing to create, and for the future payments of which, in specie, they need be at no expense in making provision.

This explanation will also account, in a great measure, for the *unanimity* with which, you tell us, *all* Scotland opposes the intended alteration. I dare say all the bankers (who are in number about 1200), and all the persons whom they

accommodate with this kind of loan, will oppose any change; but I appeal to every man who has any clear or just ideas of commercial credit, whether a SYSTEM OF ACCOMMODATION BILLS (for that is the right name), which is considered unsound and discreditable in every other country in the world, can be safe and honourable in Scotland.

It is evident, from the foregoing explanation, that the most effective checks which operate to prevent the *over issue* of an English local Bank, are all wanting in the case of a Scotch one. The notes are issued without value in the first instance—they may be forced into circulation to any amount the Banker pleases, for he never, I suppose, can want borrowers—they are kept in circulation as long as possible, for the sake of the interest—and when, finally, the fragility of the material forbids its further circulation and it comes back to the Bank, it turns out to be your *true Phœnix*, which arises again from its own ashes, and takes a new flight as bold and as extensive as its *lately deceased self*. But take care that the day may not come when

you may hear from a hungry populace the same importunities with which one of the too liberal lenders of antiquity was visited—

> Immediate are my needs; and my relief
> Must not be toss'd and turn'd to me in *notes*,
> But find supply immediate. I do fear,
> When every *feather sticks in its own wing*,
> Lord Timon will be left a naked gull,
> Who *flashes* now a *Phœnix*.

I repeat, that I myself have no doubt of the *ultimate* security of the Banks of Scotland in general. I apply my observations, as the Government, I presume, intends to apply its remedy, to those "*depositaries of panic*," the One Pound Notes, and "the giddy multitude."

Perhaps the Bankers may think that even these observations of mine may be dangerous. I might, in reply, administer to them the terrific consolation which Garrick addressed to Goldsmith, on seeing the latter discomposed by some slight criticism on a scene in one of his plays. "Pooh, pooh, man! How can you "mind a squib, who have been sitting all this "while on a barrel of gunpowder." The object, I believe, of the Government, and cer-

tainly my own, in taking a part in the discussion, is to remove, with due care and circumspection, and with as little danger as possible, the materials which might cause so tremendous an explosion.

This leads me to another, and by no means unimportant, consideration. You argue this question, as if it was *exclusively a Scottish* one, in which England has no *direct interest*, and can only be guided by the silly vanity of extending her own system into the Sister Country; and you illustrate our conduct by that of a crazy Scottish Laird, who was in the habit of forcing one of Anderson's pills down the throat of every guest who visited at his house.

I must confess that, however I may have complained of the unfairness of any of your arguments, I cannot but applaud the *candour* and national impartiality of your jokes; for every illustration which you have given of our English errors has been the recital of some Scottish absurdity.

But admitting, for a moment, that England had no direct interest in the welfare of Scot-

land, would it not be a more accurate illustration, *if we needs must have a medical one*, to compare us—not to a cracked-brained humourist, who would cram his physic down the throats of those over whom he has no authority, or guardianship,—but to a prudent parent, who, having successfully vaccinated one of his children, is anxious also to place the others beyond the risk of infection.

But I say, that England, besides her general duty to the other parts of the empire, *has* a direct interest in this matter. You forget that the Picts-wall no longer exists, and that if you set fire to your stubble, the flames will soon invade ours; and, to return to Garrick's metaphor, that you cannot explode a barrel of gunpowder without doing so near a neighbour almost as much injury as yourself.

One of your arguments, why England should not interfere with your concerns, is, I admit, a strong one, but unluckily, it happens, I think, to be strong, *just the other way*. The circulation of the Scottish Bank notes is, you say, "free and unlimited—they pass without a

" shadow of objection through the whole limits " of Scotland, and are current nearly as far as " York in England." I am so candid as to be willing to help this argument a little further; for, on my return from Scotland, in last autumn, I found that the Scottish notes were accepted, at least, one hundred miles South of York. But, since this is the case, and since Scottish notes form some considerable part of the circulation of the Northern counties, I take leave to ask, with additional confidence, has England not a clear *right*—nay, is she not bound by an imperative *duty* towards *her own subjects,* to take care that they are not made the victims of Scottish inroads which, though not so bloody, might be much more extensively calamitous, than the border invasions of the freebooters of old?

This objection may seem, at first sight, to be a slight, or at least, a local one; but on consideration, I think you will find it to be of immense *practical* importance. I suppose you will readily admit that if we prohibit the circulation of all English small notes, even those of the Bank of England itself, we cannot allow

the existence within England of the small notes of Scotch Bankers; and by what means, if permitted in Scotland, are they to be excluded from Northumberland? Are we to rebuild the Pictish wall, and have a Custom-house at every gate?—or are we to make *highly penal* the passing a note on one side of an imaginary boundary, which we sanction as *highly advantageous* on the other? Pray look a little into the *practical* details of this part of the subject, and let us see whether any other mode could be devised of preventing endless confusion and difficulties, than that which, in the spirit of the Act of Union, our Ministers intend to propose, namely, "that the coin and currency of England and Scotland should be the same," and that "the regulations which affect trade and commercial credit should be assimilated throughout the United Kingdom."

I now conclude. I persuade myself that there is so much reason in what I have said, that you will not—that you *can* not, on a cool reconsideration, essentially differ from my general conclusions, and I hope that I have not

been betrayed, either by the tone of peevishness, which here and there marks your letter, or by the warmth of my own argument, into any expression inconsistent with a feeling dear to my heart—the respect and affection, which I entertain for that admirable, and, (though his descendant, I will venture to add,) illustrious person, to whom we are both indebted for our names and existence.

I am,
Dear Malachi,
Your affectionate Cousin,
E. Bradwardine Waverley.

POSTSCRIPT.

I have just seen your *second* and your *third* letters, but as they add nothing new to the *principles* of the questions which we have discussed, and as it is a tedious, and generally fruitless, labour, to argue about *details*, I am not, in my present temper, inclined to make any observations upon them. If what I have said in these two letters of mine be well founded, your subsequent epistles are, in their main points, answered by anticipation; and if I have not already been successful in making some impression on your mind, I fear the case is hopeless, and that your conversion is not to be operated by consanguineous persuasion.

E. B. W.

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TWO LETTERS

TO

MALACHI MALAGROWTHER, Esq.

SECOND EDITION.

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